

Marijuana and Other Drugs

Despite a steady decline in the use of alcohol and tobacco among youth in recent years, there has not been a similar decrease in marijuana use in the past decade. Several factors may be contributing to the continued use of this substance over time. The perceived risk of harm of using marijuana may be lessened by public discussions about legalizing marijuana for medical purposes. There is also an absence of public health messaging about the harmful effects of using marijuana. The surge in the availability and use of synthetic marijuana may also be a factor. Synthetic marijuana, also known as “K2” or “Spice,” and other names, are herbal mixtures sold as incense, but when smoked, mimic the effects of actual marijuana.¹

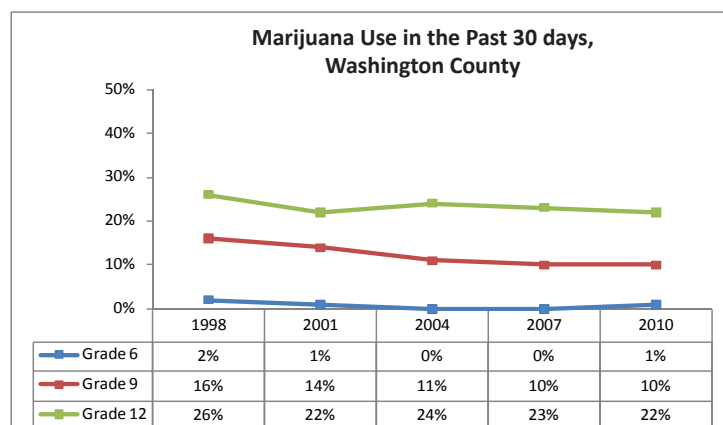
Based on the Surgeon General’s warning on marijuana, among the known or suspected chronic effects of the drug are: short-term memory impairment and slowness of learning; impaired lung function, decreased sperm count and sperm mobility, interference with ovulation and pre-natal development; impaired immune response; and possible adverse effects on heart function.

Other illicit drug use of concern that can cause adverse health affects and addiction include pain relievers (for non-medical use), ADHD/ADD drugs, crack/cocaine, inhalants, LSD/psychedelics; MDMA/ecstasy, sedatives, heroin and methamphetamine.

Key Trends

- There has been a 15% decline in the use of marijuana “in the past 30 days” among 12th graders in the county since 1998. However, over one in five 12th grade students reported using it in 2010.
- The growth in the popularity, accessibility and use of synthetic marijuana in recent years is cause for concern.
- Use of marijuana among young adults ages 18-25 in Minnesota has remained high over the past decade. More than one in four young adults reported using marijuana “in the past year” since 2003.

Youth Marijuana Use



Source: Minnesota Student Survey Interagency Team

Youth Marijuana Use

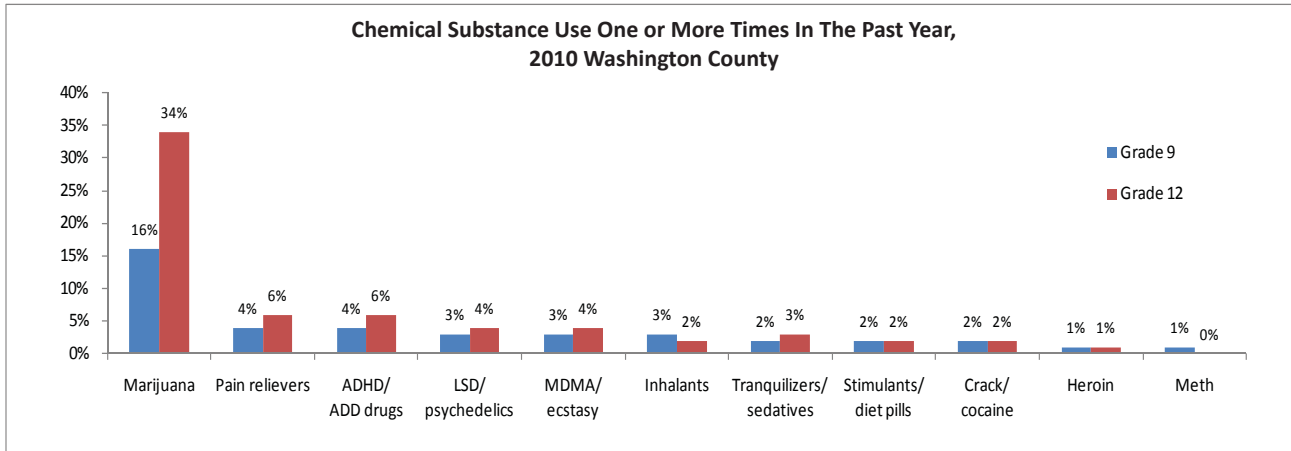
- Marijuana use among 9th and 12th grade students declined minimally over the past decade.
- One in ten 9th graders and over one in five 12th graders reported using marijuana in the past 30 days in 2010.
- Marijuana use is most prevalent among 12th grade males, with 29% reporting using it in the past month.

Youth Substance Abuse

- Marijuana continues to be the substance of choice after alcohol among 9th and 12th grade students. In 2010, 34% of 12th graders and 16% of 9th graders reported using marijuana one or more times in the past year.
- When asked about the perceived risk of harm of marijuana use, only 60% of 12th graders felt that smoking marijuana once or twice a week was harmful. This compares with 80% of 12th graders who felt that consuming five or more drinks of alcohol one or more times a week was harmful.

Youth Substance Abuse continued

- About 6% of 12th graders and 4% of 9th graders reported using pain relievers and ADHD/ADD drugs in the past year.
- Use of methamphetamine and crack cocaine has decreased gradually since 2001 for both grades.



Source: Minnesota Student Survey Interagency Team

Illicit Drug Use in the Past Year, Adults, Minnesota

- Young adults, ages 18-25, have the highest illicit drug use rates among all adult age ranges. In 2008, approximately one in three adults in Minnesota ages 18-25 reported using marijuana in the past year, compared with slightly over 7% of adults ages 26 and older.
- Use of pain relievers for non-medical purposes rose between 2003 and 2008. In 2008, nearly 13% of adults ages 18-25 used pain relievers (for non-medical use), compared with about 3% of adults ages 26 and older.
- Cocaine use among young adults ages 18-25 was slightly over 6% in 2008, unchanged from 2003.

Ages 18-25	2003-04	2005-06	2007-08
Marijuana	28.7%	28.0%	33.2%
Pain Relievers (non-medical use)	9.3%	11.3%	12.7%
Cocaine	6.4%	6.8%	6.4%

Ages 26+	2003-04	2005-06	2007-08
Marijuana	7.2%	7.9%	7.4%
Pain Relievers (non-medical use)	2.8%	2.9%	3.4%
Cocaine	1.4%	1.5%	1.7%

Source: SAMSHA, Office of Applied Studies, NSADUH, 2002-2008. County-level data is not available for adult illicit drug use.

- In the first half of 2010, slightly over 50% of all admissions to Twin Cities' area treatment programs were for alcohol. Treatment for marijuana use comprised 19% of all admissions. Treatment admissions for methamphetamine (meth) followed at 7% and cocaine-related admissions at 6%. Among those admitted for meth, two thirds were male, 80% were White, and over three-fourths were ages 26 or older.¹
- Estimated hospital emergency department visits involving methamphetamine in the Twin Cities fell from 2,209 in 2005 to 970 in 2009.¹

Contact Information:

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Endnotes

¹Minnesota Department of Human Services, Drug Abuse Trends in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Minnesota, January 2011.